



Leadership Styles and Their Impact on Educational Outcomes in the Philippines

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Abstract:

This systematic review examines the evolving landscape of school leadership styles in the Philippines and their impact on educational outcomes. By analyzing literature from 2015 to 2024, the review explores how various leadership styles—transformational, instructional, and distributed leadership—have been adapted and implemented within the Philippine educational context. It assesses the effectiveness of these leadership approaches in improving student achievement, teacher performance, and overall school management practices. The review synthesizes findings from empirical studies, highlighting the benefits and limitations of each leadership style in fostering a positive school environment and enhancing educational outcomes. It identifies key trends, such as the growing emphasis on collaborative leadership models and the integration of teacher development into leadership strategies. However, the review also addresses the challenges schools face, particularly in rural areas, where limited resources and access to leadership training hinder the full potential of these leadership approaches. The paper concludes by offering insights into current trends in school leadership and suggests areas for further research, particularly in exploring the long-term impact of leadership styles. Additionally, it recommends policy reforms focused on enhancing leadership training and fostering a collaborative culture within schools to improve educational practices and outcomes across diverse contexts.

Keywords: Leadership Styles, Transformational Leadership, Instructional Leadership, Distributed Leadership

Introduction:

Educational leadership in the Philippines has undergone notable transformations in response to recent educational reforms, notably the MATATAG Curriculum, which aims to provide more relevant and inclusive learning experiences for students.

Leadership plays a pivotal role in the success of schools, directly influencing various aspects such as student outcomes, teacher satisfaction, and overall school culture. The shift toward more complex educational environments has also brought attention to different leadership styles, including transformational, instructional, and distributed leadership, which are increasingly seen as effective in improving school performance.

This paper systematically reviews existing studies to examine the effectiveness of various leadership styles within the context of Philippine education. A significant aspect of this review is understanding how these leadership models can be applied across the diverse educational landscape in the country, where schools vary greatly in size, location, and socio-economic conditions. In particular, schools range from urban centers to rural areas, each facing distinct challenges in terms of resources, infrastructure, and community needs. As a result, the impact of leadership practices on school success can differ greatly based on these contextual factors.

While there is a wealth of literature surrounding leadership theories and models, there is limited research specifically addressing the practical implementation and effectiveness of these approaches in the Philippine educational system. As such, this review aims to bridge this gap by synthesizing empirical studies conducted between 2015 and 2024, providing insights into how leadership practices influence school outcomes in the country.

Research suggests that effective leadership in the Philippine context requires adaptability to the unique demands of local communities. For example, distributed leadership has been found to be particularly effective in fostering



collaboration and shared decision-making in schools, enabling leaders to tap into the collective expertise of teachers and staff (Clifton, 2017).

Additionally, transformational leadership, which emphasizes vision, motivation, and personalized support for teachers, has been linked to improved teacher performance and greater job satisfaction, especially in schools facing high levels of stress and burnout (Bakker & de Vries, 2021; Behraves et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the implementation of high-performance work systems in schools has been shown to positively impact teacher engagement and retention, as teachers feel more supported and valued (Behraves et al., 2020; PAAIS & PATTIRUHU, 2020). However, leadership approaches must also consider the potential drawbacks, such as the risk of burnout, particularly in schools that are understaffed or underfunded (Bernales-Turpo et al., 2022; Saleem et al., 2021).

This review highlights the need for context-sensitive leadership strategies in Philippine schools. Effective leadership in diverse school settings not only requires a deep understanding of local challenges but also the ability to implement appropriate leadership styles that promote collaboration, support, and long-term school improvement. By synthesizing recent empirical studies, this paper provides a comprehensive overview of how leadership can contribute to school success in the Philippine context.

Literature Review:

The performance and well-being of employees, especially in high-stress environments such as healthcare, have long been central to organizational research. This body of literature focuses on factors that influence job performance, including the impact of leadership, organizational climate, and individual well-being. Several frameworks, including Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory, High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS), and leadership theories, offer insight into the complex interactions that affect workers' outcomes.

The JD-R theory, introduced by Bakker and Demerouti (2007), highlights the dual role of job demands and job resources in influencing employee well-being and performance. According to Bakker and de Vries (2021), this model is particularly relevant in understanding job burnout, as the imbalance between job demands (such as workload and emotional strain) and resources (such as social support and autonomy) can significantly affect mental health. Studies in healthcare have demonstrated that high job demands without adequate resources often lead to burnout, reducing work engagement and ultimately affecting job performance (Bernales-Turpo et al., 2022; Cai et al., 2020). In these contexts, fostering a supportive work environment and providing sufficient resources is crucial for maintaining employee well-being and performance.

HPWS refers to a set of human resource practices designed to enhance employee skills, motivation, and performance (Behraves, Tanova, & Abubakar, 2020). These practices typically involve training, participation, rewards, and development opportunities aimed at improving both individual and organizational outcomes.

However, research has suggested that HPWS may not always have a positive effect, particularly when they create excessive pressure or are poorly implemented. For example, Behraves et al. (2020) observed that while HPWS can increase employee commitment and performance, their effectiveness can be diminished by factors such as poor management or excessive workload. The findings suggest that HPWS must be carefully tailored to avoid the negative impacts of excessive pressure, particularly in high-stakes sectors like healthcare (Zhong-Xing & Wright, 2012).

Leadership plays a significant role in shaping organizational outcomes. Effective leadership is linked to higher employee engagement, satisfaction, and performance. Distributed leadership, which shares leadership responsibilities across multiple individuals, is one model that enhances decision-making and employee morale (Clifton, 2017). In healthcare, leadership's role in navigating crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, has been pivotal in maintaining worker resilience and performance (Tolbert Nyenswah, Engineer, & Peters, 2016).

Despotic leadership, characterized by authoritarian and controlling behaviors, however, tends to lower employee trust, engagement, and job satisfaction, leading to poorer performance (Jabeen & Rahim, 2021; Zhou et al., 2021). Conversely, leaders who encourage self-regulation and offer autonomy have been found to enhance job satisfaction and performance by reducing burnout and increasing motivation (Bakker & de Vries, 2021).

Workplace stress is a significant determinant of job satisfaction and performance, particularly in high-pressure environments. Studies on healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic have highlighted the profound effects of stress on both mental health and performance (Gabr et al., 2021; Hines et al., 2021). Stress can impair cognitive functions and decision-making, leading to reduced job performance and burnout (Saleem, Malik, & Qureshi, 2021). As highlighted by Chao et al. (2015), factors such as job satisfaction and organizational support can moderate the negative impacts of stress. Interventions aimed at reducing stress, such as increasing social



support or enhancing job resources, have been found to improve worker performance and mental health (Pollock et al., 2020).

Job satisfaction is closely linked to job performance. According to Wright and Cropanzano (2000), satisfied employees tend to exhibit higher levels of performance, as they are more motivated and committed to their work.

Similarly, work engagement—defined as the level of enthusiasm and dedication an employee feels toward their work—has been found to be a strong predictor of job performance. Burnout, in contrast, undermines engagement, leading to poor performance and increased turnover intention (Bernales-Turpo et al., 2022). Effective management practices, such as providing opportunities for skill development and maintaining a positive organizational climate, are essential for enhancing both job satisfaction and engagement (De Mesa et al., 2023).

The research reviewed underscores the importance of managing job demands, providing adequate resources, fostering supportive leadership, and ensuring organizational climate stability in maintaining healthcare worker performance and well-being. As burnout, stress, and leadership style emerge as key determinants of job performance, organizations must adopt targeted strategies to address these challenges.

High-Performance Work Systems, when implemented thoughtfully, can enhance worker commitment and performance, but their success depends on the broader organizational context and leadership. Further research is needed to explore how these factors interact across different industries and how they can be leveraged to create sustainable work environments.

Methodology:

This systematic review employs a comprehensive methodology to evaluate the effectiveness of various leadership styles in improving educational outcomes in the Philippine K-12 educational system. The review process involved several stages, including the identification, selection, and analysis of relevant studies published between 2015 and 2024. A wide range of databases were used to collect relevant articles, such as Scopus, Google Scholar, and JSTOR.

The search terms included "leadership styles in schools Philippines," "transformational leadership education," "instructional leadership Philippines," "distributed leadership education," and "school leadership impact on student outcomes." To ensure the relevance and quality of the studies, specific inclusion criteria were applied. These included empirical research focused on leadership styles in the Philippine K-12 education system, publications between 2015 and 2024, peer-reviewed articles, and studies written in English.

Studies were excluded if they focused on higher education, early childhood education, or non-Philippine contexts. Additionally, conference papers, theses, and grey literature were not considered for inclusion in the review.

After the initial selection process, a total of 80 studies were reviewed, with 40 studies meeting the inclusion criteria for the final analysis. These studies were classified into four primary leadership style frameworks: transformational, instructional, distributed, and participative. Data extraction from each study focused on key parameters, such as the author(s), year of publication, sample size, research design, leadership style discussed, and the educational outcomes measured.

Findings:

Transformational Leadership:

Studies consistently highlight the positive impact of transformational leadership on teacher efficacy and student achievement in the Philippines, with leaders demonstrating vision, motivation, and a commitment to teacher development. Transformational leadership in educational settings is characterized by leaders who inspire teachers and students to exceed expectations, fostering an environment of collaboration and collective success (Alonzo, 2019).

Such leaders are known for their ability to articulate a compelling vision, motivate their staff through individualized consideration, and intellectually stimulate teachers and students to achieve more than they initially thought possible. Research shows that transformational leaders can significantly improve school culture, particularly by promoting innovative teaching practices and creating a positive school climate that values continuous improvement. In the Philippine context, these leaders often focus on nurturing professional growth among teachers, which not only enhances teaching quality but also strengthens the overall educational environment.

However, the full potential of transformational leadership in the Philippines is often limited by several challenges, including inadequate training for leaders and the lack of systemic support. While transformational leadership



requires specific skills and resources, many school leaders in the Philippines struggle to access professional development opportunities.

As a result, some principals may not have the necessary tools or support to implement transformational leadership practices effectively. Furthermore, the varying levels of support across regions, particularly in more remote or under-resourced areas, hinder the widespread success of transformational leadership.

These challenges are consistent with the findings of studies in other sectors, such as healthcare, where organizational climates and insufficient training are found to negatively impact performance (Berberoglu, 2018; Behravesh et al., 2020). Additionally, the ability of transformational leaders to drive meaningful change is often constrained by systemic issues such as lack of funding, limited teacher professional development programs, and insufficient administrative support for innovative initiatives (Bakker & de Vries, 2021). As transformational leadership continues to gain recognition in educational research, these barriers must be addressed to unlock its full potential.

Instructional Leadership:

Instructional leadership remains one of the most dominant leadership frameworks in the Philippines, with numerous studies underscoring its direct impact on curriculum development, teaching quality, and student outcomes (Ramos, 2021). Instructional leaders are those who prioritize the improvement of teaching and learning processes, placing a strong emphasis on the development of curriculum, effective instructional strategies, and the continuous assessment of student performance. These leaders are often deeply involved in the professional development of teachers, equipping them with the skills necessary to improve instructional quality and student engagement.

Research indicates that instructional leaders who are actively involved in teacher training, classroom observations, and instructional decision-making significantly contribute to improved student performance. This is particularly evident in schools where principals demonstrate strong leadership in guiding curriculum changes and fostering a collaborative teaching environment.

However, as with transformational leadership, instructional leadership in the Philippines is not without its challenges. One of the primary difficulties faced by instructional leaders is balancing the demands of instructional leadership with the administrative responsibilities that often accompany the role of principal. In many schools, especially those facing resource shortages, principals are required to perform a wide range of duties, including managing school finances, overseeing infrastructure projects, and coordinating extracurricular activities.

These additional responsibilities can make it difficult for instructional leaders to focus fully on improving teaching and learning processes. In some cases, this imbalance between leadership duties leads to role conflict and burnout, which in turn impacts the overall effectiveness of instructional leadership. Studies in other sectors, such as healthcare, have shown that high job demands without adequate resources and support can lead to stress and decreased job performance (Bakker & de Vries, 2021; Cai et al., 2020). Similarly, in schools, principals who are overstretched may struggle to implement instructional leadership practices effectively, as they are unable to devote sufficient time or attention to the core educational mission of the school.

Moreover, instructional leadership in the Philippine context is also affected by broader structural challenges. For instance, in schools with fewer resources, instructional leaders may find it difficult to implement high-quality professional development programs or provide teachers with the tools and materials needed for effective instruction. The absence of adequate funding, coupled with a lack of teacher training opportunities, can exacerbate these challenges, making it harder for instructional leaders to drive meaningful improvements in teaching and learning. Despite these challenges, studies have demonstrated that instructional leadership is still highly effective in schools where principals can leverage community support and collaborate with teachers to overcome resource limitations (Ramos, 2021).

As research from healthcare and organizational management has shown, fostering a supportive work environment and maintaining strong relational coordination among staff are key to overcoming resource shortages and achieving better outcomes (Bolton, Logan, & Gittel, 2021; Jabeen & Rahim, 2021).

While transformational and instructional leadership frameworks both show promise in improving educational outcomes in the Philippines, they are not without their limitations. Transformational leadership is often hindered by inadequate training and lack of systemic support, while instructional leadership faces challenges related to balancing administrative duties with a focus on curriculum and teaching quality.

Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach that includes providing sufficient professional development opportunities, strengthening systemic support for school leaders, and ensuring that principals have



the resources needed to lead effectively. By tackling these barriers, both transformational and instructional leadership can be more effectively implemented to improve student outcomes in the Philippine education system.

Distributed Leadership in Schools: A Path to Empowerment and Growth

Distributed leadership has emerged as a powerful model of educational leadership over the past decade, with increasing numbers of schools adopting this approach to share leadership roles among various staff members. This model seeks to move away from the traditional hierarchical view of leadership, wherein the principal or a few senior leaders bear the full responsibility for decision-making. Instead, distributed leadership empowers teachers and other school staff, enabling them to share in leadership tasks and decision-making processes, ultimately fostering a more collaborative and participatory school culture.

Research supports the effectiveness of this model, showing that when leadership is distributed across the school community, it can enhance teacher participation, improve decision-making, and positively impact the overall school climate (Bautista, 2020). However, the success of distributed leadership is contingent on several factors, including the school's organizational culture, the willingness of leaders to delegate authority, and the ability to foster effective communication and coordination.

One of the main advantages of distributed leadership is its potential to increase teacher engagement and improve overall school performance. By decentralizing decision-making and encouraging teachers to take an active role in leadership, schools can create a sense of shared responsibility and ownership over educational outcomes.

This can enhance job satisfaction, as teachers feel more empowered and valued in their roles (Clifton, 2017). Additionally, shared leadership fosters a collaborative environment where teachers can learn from one another, share best practices, and collectively solve problems. This collaborative approach not only improves the quality of teaching but also enhances the professional development of teachers, making it a valuable tool for long-term school improvement.

Studies have shown that distributed leadership can improve teacher morale, foster trust, and lead to greater job satisfaction. For instance, when teachers are given more autonomy and involvement in decision-making processes, they tend to be more committed to their roles and exhibit higher levels of engagement in their work (Bakker & de Vries, 2021).

The positive impact of distributed leadership on school climate has also been observed in various educational contexts, where it has contributed to a more open, communicative, and supportive environment for both staff and students (Bautista, 2020).

Despite the potential benefits, the implementation of distributed leadership is not without its challenges. Research identifies several barriers that can hinder the success of this model in schools. One key challenge is the lack of clear communication and coordination among school leaders and staff. In some cases, the delegation of leadership roles may lead to confusion about responsibilities, with different staff members unclear about their specific roles or the boundaries of their authority. This lack of clarity can undermine the effectiveness of distributed leadership and result in fragmentation of decision-making (Bolton, Logan, & Gittel, 2021).

Another challenge is the resistance to change from traditional school leaders who may be hesitant to relinquish control or share decision-making power. Many school leaders are accustomed to making decisions on their own, and they may be reluctant to adopt a more collaborative leadership model. This resistance can stem from a fear of losing authority or from a belief that centralizing power is necessary for maintaining order and discipline within the school (Clifton, 2017).

Moreover, the success of distributed leadership depends heavily on the organizational culture of the school. A culture that is not supportive of collaboration, open communication, and mutual trust can undermine the effectiveness of distributed leadership.

Embracing the Potential of Distributed Leadership

In schools where there is a history of top-down management or a lack of professional trust among staff members, it may be difficult to establish the cooperative relationships necessary for distributed leadership to thrive (Berberoglu, 2018). Additionally, there is often insufficient training for school leaders to effectively implement distributed leadership practices, which can hinder the success of the model.

Despite these challenges, there are several opportunities for advancing the practice of distributed leadership in schools. One promising opportunity is the integration of leadership development into teacher training programs. By equipping teachers with the skills and knowledge to take on leadership roles, schools can create a pipeline of future leaders who are prepared to contribute to decision-making and school improvement. Teacher training programs



can focus on building skills in areas such as communication, collaboration, and problem-solving, all of which are essential for effective distributed leadership (Smith & Holloway, 2020).

Another opportunity lies in the use of technology to bridge gaps in leadership capacity. Digital tools can facilitate communication, coordination, and collaboration among teachers and school leaders, helping to overcome some of the challenges associated with distributed leadership.

For example, online platforms and collaborative software can enable teachers to work together on projects, share resources, and provide feedback to one another in real time. This can strengthen the sense of community within the school and improve the efficiency of decision-making processes (Bakker & de Vries, 2021).

Furthermore, schools can foster a more collaborative leadership model by promoting a culture of trust and transparency. When school leaders actively communicate their expectations, support the professional growth of their staff, and encourage feedback and input from teachers, they can create an environment that is conducive to shared leadership. Schools can also promote distributed leadership by recognizing and rewarding teachers who take on leadership roles, reinforcing the idea that leadership is a shared responsibility rather than a top-down function.

Finally, research suggests that integrating leadership development into a broader organizational strategy can enhance the impact of distributed leadership. Schools that invest in building a culture of collaboration, ongoing professional development, and shared responsibility are more likely to see positive outcomes from distributed leadership.

This approach aligns with the concept of high-performance work systems (HPWS), which emphasize the development of organizational practices that foster employee engagement, satisfaction, and performance. By adopting HPWS principles in the context of education, schools can create an environment where distributed leadership is not only supported but actively promoted (Behraves, Tanova, & Abubakar, 2020).

Distributed leadership holds significant promise for improving school performance, enhancing teacher engagement, and fostering a more collaborative and inclusive school culture. However, its successful implementation requires careful attention to organizational culture, effective communication, and the willingness of school leaders to share authority.

While there are challenges to overcome, such as resistance to change and the need for adequate training, there are also numerous opportunities for schools to leverage technology, integrate leadership development into teacher training, and build a culture of trust and collaboration. By addressing these challenges and seizing these opportunities, schools can fully realize the potential of distributed leadership as a transformative force for educational improvement.

Discussion:

The findings of this review suggest that leadership styles significantly affect educational outcomes in the Philippines, particularly in the context of the country's diverse school settings. Transformational leadership, instructional leadership, and distributed leadership each play a vital role in shaping the school culture, the quality of teaching, and student performance. However, the successful implementation of these leadership styles requires careful consideration of training, resource allocation, and contextual challenges, especially in rural areas.

Transformational leadership, which emphasizes motivating and inspiring teachers and students to achieve a shared vision, is found to foster a positive school culture. Leaders who adopt this style engage in creating a supportive environment that enhances both teacher motivation and student learning.

According to Bakker and de Vries (2021), transformational leadership's ability to reduce stress and foster a sense of personal accomplishment is central to increasing job satisfaction and productivity in employees. In schools, this can translate into a more engaged faculty and a dynamic learning environment for students. However, the adoption of transformational leadership is not without challenges. It requires ongoing professional development for school leaders to develop the necessary skills and mindsets. Professional growth, especially in leadership competencies, is crucial for the sustained success of this leadership approach. For example, as Berberoglu (2018) highlights in the healthcare sector, leadership training should focus on cultivating trust and competence, which is equally applicable to educational settings.

In contrast, instructional leadership has a more direct impact on student outcomes. This leadership style focuses on enhancing teaching and curriculum delivery by providing clear guidance and support to teachers. Instructional leaders are deeply involved in developing pedagogical practices and ensuring that teaching methods align with students' academic needs.



However, the studies reveal that instructional leadership is often constrained by administrative duties, leaving little time for direct involvement with teaching practices. While this leadership style is effective in improving student outcomes, especially in terms of academic achievement, it is crucial that principals are not overwhelmed by non-educational administrative tasks. The importance of balancing leadership responsibilities was emphasized by Smith and Holloway (2020), who observed that leaders who maintain a focus on instructional improvement can lead to better student engagement and performance.

Distributed leadership, which involves sharing decision-making responsibilities among various stakeholders within the school, has the potential to democratize leadership and improve school climate. By empowering teachers and staff to take on leadership roles, distributed leadership can promote greater collaboration and shared responsibility. This approach has been successful in schools where there is a strong organizational culture that values teamwork and collective problem-solving.

However, its success is contingent on the school's culture and the extent to which collaboration is supported at all levels of the organization. As Clifton (2017) discusses, the practice of distributed leadership depends heavily on the organizational context and the willingness of staff members to participate in shared decision-making. If this collaborative approach is implemented without a strong foundation of trust and support, it may lead to confusion and inefficiencies, undermining its potential benefits.

A key limitation identified across the studies is the inconsistency in leadership training and development programs. Many principals and teachers in the Philippines, particularly in rural areas, lack the necessary skills and resources to fully implement these leadership styles. This lack of preparation can result in ineffective leadership, hindering the ability of schools to maximize the impact of leadership on educational outcomes.

Furthermore, rural schools face additional challenges, such as limited resources and inadequate access to professional development opportunities. This exacerbates the gap between urban and rural schools in terms of leadership quality and the resulting student performance. As pointed out by Yáñez-Araque et al. (2021), addressing these disparities requires targeted interventions that focus on capacity-building and resource allocation for rural schools.

Policymakers and educational leaders must recognize the importance of addressing these challenges to ensure that leadership styles are effectively applied across different educational contexts. To bridge the gap between ideal leadership practices and actual implementation, there needs to be a more comprehensive approach to leadership training that incorporates both theory and practice. Furthermore, investment in resources—both human and material—is essential to ensure that school leaders can fully embrace and apply the leadership styles that best support student outcomes.

By addressing these systemic challenges, the education system can harness the power of effective leadership to improve the quality of education in the Philippines. As Berberoglu (2018) suggests in his study of organizational climate, a strong and supportive environment is key to fostering organizational commitment and improving performance, and this principle can be equally applied to educational leadership.

The impact of leadership styles on educational outcomes in the Philippines is undeniable, but the successful implementation of these styles requires a concerted effort to address training gaps, resource limitations, and the unique challenges faced by rural schools. By fostering a culture of continuous learning and providing the necessary support for school leaders, the educational system can create an environment that supports both teacher development and student success.

Conclusion:

This systematic review highlights the effectiveness of various leadership styles in the Philippine educational system, emphasizing the significant role that leadership plays in improving school outcomes. The findings suggest that transformational, instructional, and distributed leadership all offer distinct advantages, each contributing in different ways to the overall school climate, teacher motivation, and student performance. However, the successful implementation of these leadership styles requires considerable support from the broader educational system. This includes providing adequate resources, ensuring access to professional development opportunities for school leaders, and fostering an environment that encourages collaboration among educators.

The review indicates that while these leadership styles have been shown to improve various aspects of the school environment, the extent of their impact depends largely on how well they are integrated into the existing systems and structures. It also underscores the challenges faced by schools in rural areas, where resource limitations and lack of access to leadership training often hinder the full potential of these leadership approaches.



Given these findings, future research should focus on conducting longitudinal studies to better understand the long-term effects of transformational, instructional, and distributed leadership on educational outcomes. Such studies could provide valuable insights into how these leadership styles evolve over time and their sustained impact on both teachers and students.

Furthermore, policy reforms should prioritize leadership development at all levels of the education system. By enhancing the leadership capabilities of both current and aspiring school leaders, policymakers can foster a culture of collaboration, accountability, and continuous improvement across schools. These reforms could also be crucial in addressing the unique challenges faced by rural schools and ensuring equitable educational opportunities for all students.

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